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R E P O R T
OF THE
C O M M I T T E E
ON THE
PROTECTION OF COMMERCE,
AND THE
DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY,
TO WHOM WAS REFERRED, THE
M E M O R I A L
OF THE
NEW-YORK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

2d April, 1798,
Referred to the Committee of the whole House, on
the State of the Union.

[Published by order of the House of Representatives.]

Section 2. 5798



R E P O R T.

The COMMITTEE, on that part of the President's Speech which relates to the protection of commerce, and the defence of the country; to whom was referred the memorial of the New-York Chamber of Commerce,

REPORT—

THAT the very extensive fortifications, which are requisite to place the harbour of New-York in a posture of defence and security, are incomplete. notwithstanding the efforts which have been made, in part, by the United States, and principally by the state of New-York, towards effecting this desirable purpose. Under the direction of the President of the United States, and pursuant to the act to provide for the defence of certain ports and harbors, the sum of thirteen thousand, five hundred and twenty-two dollars, and thirty-six cents, was expended on the fortifications in New-York harbor, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four; and five thousand dollars were remitted for the same object in one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six. The state of New-York has expended much larger sums in the same period, and to this time; and thus several valuable fortifications have been erected, and are in progress. The unfinished state of some of these fortifications, and the general deficiency of cannon and ammunition there, require the attention of Congress, at this crisis of public danger. To cover, as far as possible, this important point of the Union, from every probability of a successful attack, additional fortifications are undoubt-

edly necessary. This Congress, in their late session, contemplated a large provision for both these objects, by authorizing an expenditure by any state, of the balance in which they had been found indebted to the United States, in fortifying their respective ports and harbors; and the state of New-York being the most considerable of the indebted states. This proposal has been, however, wholly neglected, and it is understood, that the proviso of a cession of the lands or places on which fortifications shall be erected, as requisite to the allowance of any expenditure, has defeated the good intentions of Congress in this regard.

For the first mentioned object, to wit, an immediate supply towards the finishing of the fortifications which have been commenced in the harbor of New-York, and the providing a sufficiency of cannon and ammunition, the Committee recommend, that the same be considered and provided in the general appropriation, which has been proposed to be made for the fortifying of certain ports and harbors.

For the other object, additional fortifications, the Committee recommend a revision of the act passed in the last session of this Congress, providing for the further defence of the ports and harbors of the United States; and being of opinion, that a cession of the lands or places on which fortifications shall be erected is not essential to the due exercise of the powers of the United States, for the common defence, the Committee propose this resolution :—

Resolved, That a bill be reported to repeal the proviso of cession in the act providing for the further defence of the ports and harbors of the United States, and to provide, in lieu thereof, that the fortifications which shall be erected and allowed for by the United States, pursuant to that act, shall become the property of the United States; also to provide, that any state which shall accept of the proposal made by the said act, and proceed to finish any fortifications heretofore commenced, and which by the President of the United States shall be judged of

use in the defence of any port or harbor, or to make any additional fortifications under his direction, shall be allowed in the manner proposed by the said act, as well for all previous expenditures made since the twentieth of March, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, as for the expenditures which shall be made pursuant to the said proposal, not exceeding the balance in which such State respectively has been found indebted to the United States.